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### Group begins plans to widen Route 30

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Plans for a wider U.S. Route 30 began taking shape Wednesday night at the Community Advisory Group's second meeting.

A group of citizen stakeholders met and began drawing a recommended path for a wider route, as well as for a potential bypass around Morrison.

Committee members include Morrison, Fulton, Sterling and Rock Falls city officials, farmers and business owners.

The group, which first met in September, will continue to periodically meet with the Illinois Department of Transportation to identify problems the new route will create and to form solutions to those problems.

"Any time you make a change of this scope, there are a variety of things it could do to benefit or harm the community," said Tim Long, Morrison's city administrator, who was at the meeting to observe and is not on the committee.

Consultants with the engineering firms Volkert & Associates and the Howard R. Green Co., who are working with IDOT on the project, led the meeting.

After settling on a mission statement outlining the committee's goals, the group split into five subgroups to begin drawing up proposed routes, which will be reviewed at the committee's next meeting, probably in January. At that time, a specific route likely will be chosen.

One thing all committee members agree on is that there are distinct advantages to widening the road and diverting traffic around Morrison.

"What it does is it potentially provides a better expressway transportation route for logistics-type businesses, such as the Wal-Mart Distribution Center," said David Barajas Jr., committee member and executive director of the Greater Sterling Development Corp. "I don't live in Morrison, but I am close enough to it to know that the growing truck traffic that goes through there creates a burden."

While some who live in and around Morrison have concerns about building a bypass around town, Dale Sternberg, a farmer west of Morrison, said it is a good idea as long as it is done properly.

"I want to see as little farmland impacted as possible, and have it not cut 45 degrees across a lot of farmland," Sternberg said.

Although a few hundred acres of good farmland would be paved over, it would be for the greater good, he said.

"I see a need for a bypass. Actually moving machinery from east of town to west of town would be easier than cutting through Morrison," Sternberg said.

The committee will meet at least two more times to come up with a comprehensive widening plan.

Reach Andrew Walters at (815) 625-3600 or (800) 798-4085, ext. 522.

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## Reader Comments

***The following are comments from the readers. In no way do they represent the view of saukvalley.com.***

**another fleecing of america** wrote on **Oct 19, 2007 12:29 PM:**

" too have route 30 a four lane hi-way from fulton to rock falls is totally ridiculous. they have a perfectly good four lane just south of Morrison I-88.they should make a hi-way from west of Morrison to connect with I 88, most of the trucks get on 88 at the route 2-30-88 interchange a few go to wal mart distbution and the rest stay on route 30 heading east. use your head this would cut the cost in half and cut down on route 30 traffic by 75%. and would not chew up as much farmland ! "

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